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The S.O.B. of the C.I.A.

This is Stansfield Turner. He killed James Bond

By William Lowther

Admiral Stansfield Turner may be the most powerful spy master in all of history. Not only has he been director of the Central Intelligence Agency for the past year, he now has control over the entire seven-billion-dollar budget of the United States' "intelligence" machine. Turner is suave and smug. His commanding manner comes from years of giving orders that were obeyed without question. So for Turner, it's not easy being subjected,as he is these days.to a barrage of criticism, much of it from his own agents.

"If you want happy spies, I'm not here for that," he is explaining to a large group of reporters quizzing him over a hotel breakfast a few blocks from the White House. "But if you want effective spies, I can provide them. I've made a profession of leading men and women. I'm good at it. [By this time he is banging on the big oval table.] And I'll continue to be good at it."

Admiral Stansfield Turner—Amherst College, Annapolis Naval College, Rhodes scholar, U.S. Navy—likes to think of himself as Socrates; a critical, questioning gadfly. He is more of a Captain Bligh; brilliant with a brutal streak. He has a barrel chest and a red, seafaring face. Silver sideburns and a rugged profile. And an abrasive style and a cannonball diplomacy that have made him notorious since President Jimmy Carter brought him into the CIA directorship a year ago this month.

It is a cold winter morning. Breakfast doesn't please the admiral. It's not the food, it's the indignity—the prospect of being quizzed. He has turned out to eat with the press only because it's the best tactic for a bad time. His public image is appalling, but his prospects are enormous. He is out to change the course, the direction, the aims, of U.S. espionage. It's a substantial objective. And he might well achieve it.

He was Carter's second choice for the CIA job—the first was liberal lawyer and onetime Kennedy aide Theodore Sorensen, but the Senate wouldn't have him. Turner seemed more respectable. Yet despite a distinguished naval career, he was something of an unknown quantity. And that's the way, you might reason, it should have stayed. After all, spies don't normally seek a high profile. But this one is different.

The CIA was in a mess when he arrived. Three years of congressional probes and

Turner in portrait (left) and, with his aide, Commander Bernard McMahon, briefing Carter (below): there'll be some changes

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newspaper exposés had left it in the same scandal stable as Watergate and the Vietnam war. In five years the agency had been headed by five different directors. Morale was terrible. The admiral's task was to bring it under control, revitalize the staff and relaunch the agency as a major part of the defense program.

He set about it in curious fashion. He did not go directly to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia where nearly 20,000 employees were waiting for his support and leadership. He gave no pep talks. Rather he adopted that Socratic role and asked: "Is the CIA necessary? Do we need it? Are some parts of it redundant?" He opened a suite of five offices in the executive building next to the White House and gave priority to establishing his own political base.

Then the admiral called a mass meeting of CIA staff in the ultramodern auditorium that makes up part of the eight-storey glass and concrete complex set on 140 acres of well guarded land at Langley. Wearing what the spies later described at cocktail parties as "a big brash smile," he said he had decided to fire several hundred of them. His closing words, delivered James Cagney style, were: "I'm going to make this place lean and mean."

To date 820 agents have been, or are about to be sacked. All from the "clandestine service" or that part of the CIA responsible for—to lapse into espionage jargon or, as the smart set calls it,"spookspeak"—HUMINT (human intelligence), as distinct from SIGINT (signal intelligence) or COMINT (communications intelligence). For the admiral is a technocrat and sees the future of spying in scientific terms.

And the statistics, as far as they go, are with him. Only 10% of agency information comes from secret operators out in the field or the team that controls them back in Virginia. To make it worse, it is almost inevitable that this clandestine service is also responsible for most of the excess, the public trouble that has been caused for the company. For these are the spies who have not come in from the cold. The James Bonds and the George Smileys. The womanizers and the boozers. The boys who play dirty tricks. Instinctively, the admiral doesn't like them.

For the first time ever, the dismissals brought a flood of public complaint from the secret agency. Many of those so harshly treated were veterans of the Cold War. Of Korea and Vietnam. Berlin and Cuba. They had served in dark corners of the world since the legendary "Wild Bill" Donovan first recruited them into the old OSS for World War II. One spoke for all when he said: "To receive the grateful thanks of a grateful government for services rendered—sometimes overseas at great hazard—in the form of a two-sentence [dismissal] message, without any recognition of past performance, was insulting and humiliating." Told of the complaint, Turner replied: "You've really heard them crying. Often at personal risk! I bet you there isn't five of them that had personal risk." The admiral, faced with the facts—that most had indeed faced personal risk—made a public apology.

Turner (right) with General Alexander Haig on NATO manoeuvres. Admiral Bligh

Stansfield Turner was born in the jazz age, 54 years ago, in the middle-class Chicago suburb of Highland Park. He was raised as a Christian Scientist and neither smokes nor drinks. A sense of humor has largely avoided him—one friend, when pressed, offered that the admiral enjoys a good pun.

At 18 he entered Amherst College in Massachusetts but as the United States was drawn into the war in Europe he switched to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. He graduated twenty-fifth in his class of 820. It was 1946 and Turner was 23. A fellow graduate was Jimmy Carter. He was fifty-ninth in the class. Both Carter and Turner applied for a Rhodes scholarship. Carter didn't get it, Turner did. The two did not know each other then, and have only in the last months become friends.

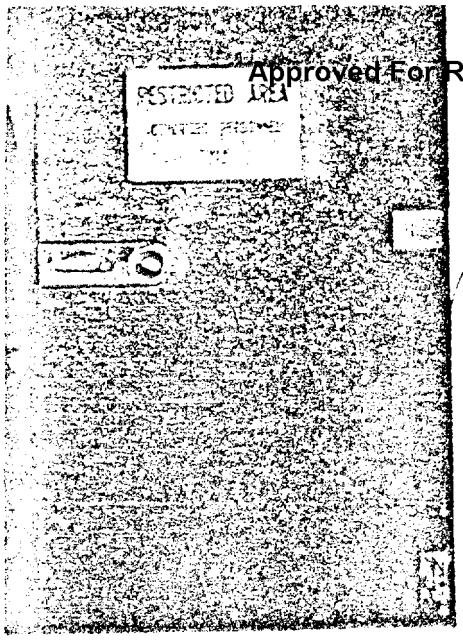
Returning from Oxford where he studied philosophy, politics and economics, Turner was thrust into the Korean War and service aboard a destroyer. His naval career has been a classic series of ship and shore promotions ever since. Pentagon duty was followed by the command of a missile frigate in the Vietnam War. In 1968 he was appointed top aide to the Navy secretary and four years later assigned to head the war college where he established his reputation. When he took over, the college was as sleepy as a country club. That ended with a rush. All students—senior officers—were suddenly assigned stiff exams, work and study. Thucydides's *History Of The Peloponnesian War* became compulsory reading. And that Socrates fantasy emerged. Everything was questioned. Change was a must. And it worked. Turner became commander of the second Atlantic fleet, then commander of NATO forces in Southern Europe and a four-star admiral. You are almost surprised to learn that he has found time to have a successful, happy marriage and father two children.

What Carter promised Turner when he called him to Washington last year is far from clear. But he certainly left the impression that anything was possible. Summoning all of his might and ambition, the admiral began campaigning at once to be made an intelligence "czar." He wanted full cabinet rank and complete control of all of America's nine intelligence agencies—including the enormous National Security Agency (NSA) and the ultra-secret National Reconnaissance Office (NRO). Not only that, but he also wanted a rota of new priorities for the spies. He argued that, in a time of peace, spying should not be dominated by tactical military considerations. Economic and social information might be of greater value to the President and his policy advisers.

This approach brought Secretary of Defense Harold Brown into the ring for a long and bitter backstage row. Brown insisted that the Pentagon retain control of NSA and NRO, that military intelligence always be given top priority in matters of national security. And he argued, more threateningly, that Russia's long-term economic goals might be academic if its short-term military movements were ignored.

Carter's compromise came in an executive order which was signed in late January. Turner was not to be made a "czar." The Pentagon retained NSA (which, with the largest bank of computers in the world, monitors global communications) and NRO (which operates America's spy satellites). The admiral, however, got control over the entire intelligence budget. And as he points out: "The man who has the budget has the golden rule."

The scenario is of interest—even concern—to Canada, as Ottawa relies a great deal on Washington, and thus the CIA, for its foreign intelligence. There is a secret treaty to share information which, in effect, means that the President tells the



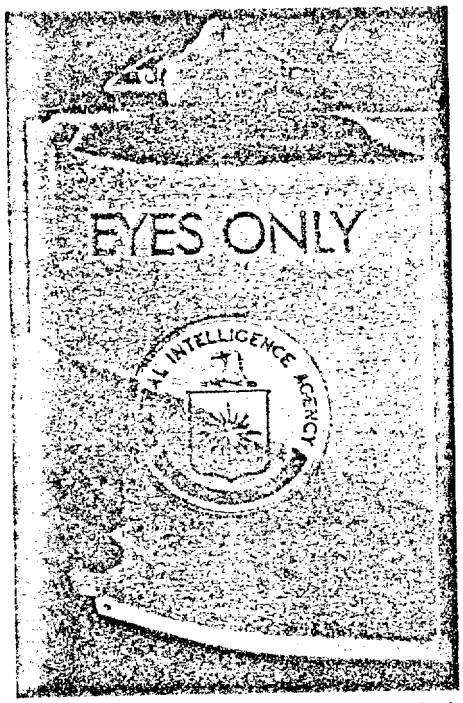
Parts of the office life at Langley: one of the more secret secret places (above), a standard clipboard, and a burn basket

Prime Minister what the President thinks the Prime Minister ought to know. What emerges from Langley in the form of analytical reports is known in espionage jargon as the CIA's "product." Behind almost every sentence lies extensive backup from deep-cover agents, spy-in-the-sky satellites and economic, political and social "observers." And the admiral's new course, insofar as he is allowed to take it, will naturally be reflected in the flow of information from Washington. And that, as can be demonstrated, may not be for the best.

Normally, the "product" is kept top secret. But now, so much do so many disapprove of Turner that his blunders have been leaked in the hope they will do him political harm.

Item: Back last summer, Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin told Carter that Moscow had evidence the South African government was building an atomic test site in the Kalahari Desert. This probably meant that Pretoria had The Bomb and was ready to surprise the world with a demonstration. Carter called Turner. In line with his policy of de-emphasizing day-to-day world watching, the agency had not been giving top priority to searching the details of satellite photographs. But the Kalahari Desert was rechecked on that week's pictures and there it was—evidence that a nuclear site was under construction. The United States was embarrassed at being beaten by its rival and Pretoria was subjected to such a barrage of diplomatic pressure that it dropped (so to speak) its bomb arrangements.

Item: Last summer the admiral reported publicly what he had been telling the President privately for weeks, that Soviet grain production for 1977 would exceed its announced goal to reach a healthy 215 million tons. The United States has a five-year contract to sell Russia eight million tons of grain annually [illegible] tional purchases are supposed to be at a higher cost per ton. Then suddenly Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev announced that grain production would in fact be miserably low—just 194 million tons. At the same time it emerged that Moscow had already bought an extra 15 million tons of U.S. grain through European agents. And they had done it at the usual low price, thus saving themselves a fortune. If Turner had been able to report the real state of affairs, that the Soviet crop was poor, extra grain sales would have been more closely watched and the Kremlin would have been forced to pay perhaps another $100 million. But, just as important, the President could have used the need for grain as a chip in the ongoing SALT negotiations. It was a bad boob. One former White House aide commented: "We can tolerate a certain



margin of error. But if all Admiral Turner's satellites, meteorologists, debriefers and spies can be so wrong about the way the grain is growing or rotting in open fields in the Ukraine, can we be confident of his recent intelligence estimates in more sensitive and more closely guarded areas like the production and development of intercontinental missiles?"

It is nearly impossible to make a valued comparison between Turner and former CIA directors—except that he may be the first with a deep sense of public morality. There is no way that he would condone or allow clandestine operations abroad that were not approved directly by the President. There will be no more assassination attempts. No more domestic spying.

And this is at least one of the reasons why he continues to enjoy Carter's confidence. The admiral sends a "state of the world" briefing to the President early each morning and spends half an hour alone with Carter on Tuesdays and Fridays. He [illegible] morning cabinet meetings. That schedule of Oval Office access—equalled only (outside of personal staff) by Vice-President Walter Mondale and national security affairs adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski—is graphic indication of the admiral's influence.

Despite his continued faith, however, the President is worried about the CIA's personnel problems. And for this reason he has upset the admiral by appointing Frank Carlucci, 47, to a powerful "deputy director" post. In an effort to reestablish the long-lost agency morale, Carlucci will take over "day-to-day operating responsibilities." Carlucci is something of a mysterious figure himself. Before his latest job he was ambassador to Portugal and had previously worked as a domestic policy maker in the Nixon administration. He was assigned to the U.S. embassy in the Congo at a time when the CIA was planning assassinations there. "I was not aware and nobody talked to me about the plot to kill Congolese premier Patrice Lumumba," Carlucci said recently. However, the welcome he is getting from old CIA hands has given rise to some suspicion that this is not Carlucci's first connection with the agency.

With an effective deputy in place the admiral is expected to spend more time now working on budget and major policy proposals, keeping as much away from direct contact with the spies as possible. There seems little doubt that his ambition is still to become navy secretary or chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. Both these jobs come vacant this summer.

Back at the reporters' breakfast, Turner is cooling down. "Look," he says, "the CIA has been run like a family business for 30 years. We need a personnel management system that is run on a non-familiar basis. I am very excited about the future of U.S. intelligence. A strong momentum is gathering behind me now. There's nothing wrong with agency morale." The admiral's last sentence is uttered more as an order than as a statement of fact. ☆